Launch of Blue-Cloud, a ground-breaking project piloting innovative services for Marine Research & the Blue Economy

Blue-Cloud, the recently funded European H2020 project aiming to federate and pilot innovative services for Marine Research & the Blue Economy, was officially kicked-off – or rather, set sail – in Pisa on the 2nd to the 4th of October 2019.

Captained by Trust-IT, a neutral, ICT-intensive SME with over 15 years' experience and technically coordinated by the community-leading marine & ocean data specialist MARIS, the project involves an additional 18 experienced partners, from research, academia & industry, with strategic and practical involvement in the design and delivery of blue community needs. An influential External Stakeholders Experts Board & an Expert Foresight Group will also support the project.

Blue-Cloud will last three years and is recognised across the board as a Flagship project for the European Commission.

The former Maritime Republic of Pisa, Italy, also hosting Trust-IT's Italian offices and the CNR unit collaborating in the project, was the perfect place to start the course challenging adventure. The 3-day meeting, involving representatives from the 20 partner organisations took place in the beautiful, ancient villa of Domus Comeliana, adjacent to the famous leaning tower.

A thematic Cloud for Marine and Blue data and services

Blue-Cloud is a flagship EU initiative that addresses the urgent contemporary challenges related to the future of the seas and oceans. The project holds great potential to deliver societal solutions via the implementation of five innovative demonstrators, covering specific domains such as biodiversity and genomics, environment, fisheries and aquaculture

Through a smart federation of data resources, computing platforms, and analytical services Blue-Cloud aims to provide researchers with access to:

- Blue multi-disciplinary data from observations, in-situ and remote sensing, data products and outputs of numerical models, and

- A blue Virtual Research Environment (VRE) with various services to support its users in undertaking world class science

Furthermore, Blue-Cloud will also elaborate and pilot the organisational and technical framework for a so called "thematic cloud" as envisioned in the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) strategy.

Reusing assets from the past to face present and future challenges

Overall, the project will not start from scratch, but instead capitalise on existing infrastructures and resources, connecting and integrating a variety of data infrastructures.

Needless to say, Blue-Cloud holds extremely high expectations, but the project builds on the solid foundations of fundamental past experiences. The 20 partners participating bring together leading European marine data management infrastructures, EOSC horizontal e-infrastructures, and top-level marine researchers.

Trust-IT, coordinating the project, will ensure trust and fairness in carrying out its role, bringing on board its extensive expertise in ICT and communications, together with past experiences in the BlueBRIDGE project and current involvement in many EOSC-related projects. Alongside them, the technical coordinator MARIS, leading the work on discovery and access to data resources and overall VRE architecture, was previously involved in the development and implementation of the Pan-European infrastructure for ocean and marine data through initiatives like EU SeaDataNet, EU SeaDataCloud and EMODnet.

A Blue-Cloud roadmap for the future of the seas and oceans (and data)

By the end of the project Blue-Cloud will also deliver a co-designed, community-oriented Blue Cloud Roadmap for the long-term, strategic development of the Blue Cloud as a leading component of EOSC and of the future "Blue" Work Programmes.

The development of the roadmap has started from the very first day of the project and foresees a wide public consultation with the relevant stakeholders.

About

Blue-Cloud is a flagship EU initiative that addresses the urgent contemporary challenges related to the future of the seas and oceans. The project holds great potential to deliver societal solutions via the implementation of five innovative demonstrators, covering specific domains such as biodiversity and genomics, environment, fisheries and aquaculture. The Blue-Cloud consortium brings together leading European marine data management infrastructures, EOSC horizontal e-infrastructures, and excellent marine researchers. Blue-Cloud addresses the IA 'The Future of Seas and Oceans Flagship Initiative' (BG-07-2019-2020) for the following topic: [A] 2019 - Blue Cloud services.

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